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Curios and Relics

Furniture

Table

Owned by Mentor Graham

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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THE GRAHAM-LINCOLN TABLE

When Dr. Allen moved to New Salem he had more furniture than the family could use in their small cabin so he sold this drop leaf walnut dining table to Mentor Graham who was very proud of it, both because it was at that time a very handsome table and because he admired Dr. Allen and appreciated his fine Christian character. He never became tired of telling where he got the table. This was told me by my mother.

After the coming of Abraham Lincoln to New Salem the table grew to have an added value for Lincoln and Graham sat at the table many nights studying and talking. Lincoln always sat at the place where the gate-leg supported the leaf, as this gave him more room for his long legs. Graham, a slender man of medium height, could be more comfortable sitting at the end.

Many times in cold weather Mrs. Graham called to Graham and Lincoln to build up the fire if they were going to sit up longer and sometimes Lincoln went outside and brought in a big log for the fireplace.

After the Civil War, when Mentor Graham's two sons, Sandy and Harry, came home from the army, they married twin sisters, Mary and Melissa Blane. Mentor and his sons bought a farm in partnership and he had rooms prepared in his home for both these new families. After several years Harry Graham sold his interest in the farm, moved to a different place, and Sandy bought the farm from his father. In 1869 Sandy's mother died and Sandy and his wife Mary kept house for Mentor, using the old furniture that he had. They had three children, Fred, Herbert and Mary, a baby one year old when Sandy died. The Blanes and Mentor Graham felt that it would be best for the young widowed mother, Mary, to move to Greenview to be near her mother and brothers. Mentor brought the furniture he had and placed it in the home prepared for Mary and the children in Greenview. He stayed with them while not teaching until Mary married James W. Huffman and then went to live with his other children. The table was used in the Huffman family as a dining table for many years. The place in Greenview was sold and later a few acres one mile east of town was purchased for a home. Mr. Huffman, a fine carpenter and cabinet maker, built a round dining table with turned legs about 1880 and the old walnut

table was used as a work table. Finally it was moved to the smoke-house where it was used for cutting meat and saw some very rough treatment. One leaf came loose and was used as a lid for a tool chest. Then one of the swinging legs came off and was finally cut into small articles turned on the lathe. The table top was gouged by using it as a carpenter's bench, etc., until the older children became interested in taking care of it. It was finally given to Mary Graham Bradley, grand daughter of Mentor Graham, by her mother, Mary Blane Graham Huffman, who had clung to it all those years in deep appreciation of the kindness and care of her father-in-law, Mentor Graham.

Henry Bradley put a pine leaf on the table, and mended it so that it would not fall apart in 1900, since which time it has been well cared for. It was sold to D. F. Nickols of Lincoln, Illinois in September, 1941.

Mrs. Mary Graham Bradley